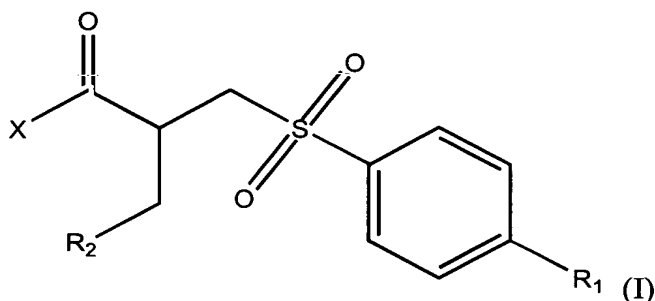


**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A compound which is a 3-arylsulfonyl-2-methyl propanoic acid derivative of formula (I):



wherein

X is HO-NH- or HO- ;

R<sub>1</sub> is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 4-fluorophenyl, 4-cyanophenyl, benzamido and benzamido substituted on the terminal phenyl ring by C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, fluoro, chloro, cyano or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkoxy;

R<sub>2</sub> is selected from:

~~(a) S-Ar or S-CH<sub>2</sub>-Ar, wherein Ar is a monocarbocyclic or bicarbocyclic aromatic moiety which may be either unsubstituted or substituted with one or two substituents selected from C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, phenyl, benzyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkoxy, fluoro, chloro, bromo, nitro, cyano, hydroxy, amino, dimethylamino, acetamido, methylthio and acetyl;~~

~~(b) O-Ar, wherein Ar is as defined above;~~

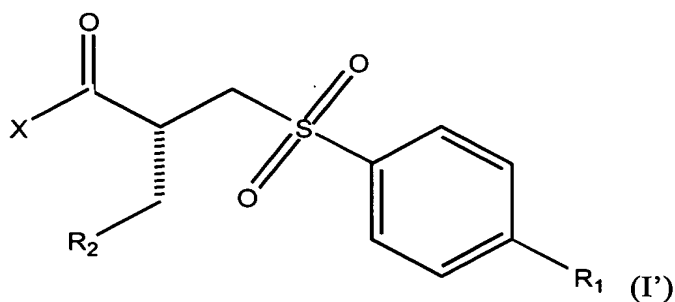
~~(c) S-Het or S-CH<sub>2</sub>-Het, wherein Het is a heterocyclic ring selected from pyridine, pyrimidine, pyridazine, pyrazine, 1,2,5 triazine, imidazole, thiophene, furan, pyrrole,~~

~~pyrazole, 1,3 thiazole, 1,3 oxazole, 1,2,3 triazole, 1,2,4 triazole, 1,3,4 thiadiazole, 1,3,4 oxadiazole, 1,2,3,4 tetrazole, quinoline, isoquinoline, indole, 1,3 benzoxazole, 1,3 benzothiazole, benzimidazole, [1,3] oxazolo [4,5 b] pyridine, [1,3] thiazolo [4,5 b] pyridine, [1,2,3,4]tetrazolo [1,5 b] pyridazine and purine, and wherein said Het group can be substituted with one to three substituents selected from C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl, phenyl, pyridyl, benzyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkoxy, methylthio, fluoro, chloro, nitro, cyano, hydroxy, oxo, amino, methylamino, dimethylamino, 2 dimethylaminoethyl, acetamido and acetyl; or~~

(d)—2,5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl or 2,4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl, which may be optionally substituted at the carbon atom by one or two methyl, linear or branched C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, phenyl, benzyl or hydroxymethyl groups, and at the nitrogen atom with C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> linear or branched alkyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. (Previously Presented) A compound according to claim 1 which is an isomer having the configuration depicted in formula(I'):



wherein X, R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined in claim 1.

3. (Currently Amended) A compound according to claim 1 which is selected from:

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~(2S)-3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanamide;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(2-pyridinylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(2-pyridinylsulfanyl)methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(2-pyridinylmethyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(2-pyridinylmethyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(5-methyl-1,3,4-thiadiazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(5-methyl-1,3,4-thiadiazolyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(5-amino-1,3,4-thiadiazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1-methyl-1H-imidazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(2-pyrimidinylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1-methyl-1H-tetrazol-5-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1-benzyl-1H-tetrazol-5-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1H-benzimidazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1,3-thiazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(2-methyl-2,1,2,3-triazol-4-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(5-phenyl-1,3,4-oxadiazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[[[1-(3-pyridinyl)-1H-imidazol-yl]sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4-methyl-1,3-oxazol-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1,3-oxazole[4,5-b]pyrimidin-2-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(1,2,3,4-tetrazolo[1,5-b]pyridazin-6-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(2,6-dimethyl-4-pyrimidinyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4,6-dimethyl-2-pyrimidinyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4-hydroxy-6-methyl-2-pyrimidinyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4,6-dihydroxy-2-pyrimidinyl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(9H-purin-6-yl)sulfanyl]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-(3-fluorophenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(2-acetylaminophenoxy)]methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4-acetylamino-phenoxy)methyl]  
propanoic acid;~~

3-[(1,1'-Biphenyl)-4-ylsulfaonyl]-2-[(3,4,4-trimethyl-2,5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl)  
methyl] propanoic acid;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(3,4,4-trimethyl-2,5-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

(2R)-3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(3,4,4-trimethyl-2,5-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(3,4,4-trimethyl-2,5-dioxo-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanamide;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(4,4-dimethyl-2,5-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl)methyl] propanoic acid;

3- [(4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2- [ (4, 4-dimethyl-2, 5-  
dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanamide;

3-[(4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2-[(2, 5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl) methyl]  
propanoic acid;

3-[(4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(2, 5-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl)-methyl] propanamide;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(3-methyl-2,5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl)  
methyl] propanoic acid;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(3-ethyl-2,5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl)  
methyl]-propanoic acid;

3- [ (4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2- [ (3-butyl-2, 5-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(3-butyl-2,5-dioxo-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanamide;

3- [ (4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2- [ (3-butyl-2, 4-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

3- [ (4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2- [ (3-butyl-2, 4-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanamide;

3- [ (4'-Chloro [ 1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2- [ (5-isopropyl-2, 4-dioxo-1-  
imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

3- [(4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2- [(5-hydroxymethyl-2, 4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

3- [(4'-Chloro [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2- [(5-hydroxymethyl-3-methyl-2, 4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

~~3- [(4' Fluoro [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 [(phenylsulfanyl) methyl] propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Fluoro [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] N hydroxy 2 [(phenylsulfanyl) methyl] propanamide;~~

~~3- [(4' Fluoro [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 (phenoxymethyl) propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Fluoro [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] N hydroxy 2 (phenoxymethyl) propanamide;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 [(phenylsulfanyl) methyl] propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] N hydroxy 2 [(phenylsulfanyl) methyl] propanamide;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 (phenoxymethyl) propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] N hydroxy 2 (phenoxymethyl) propanamide;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 (3-fluorophenoxymethyl) propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 [(2-acetylamino) phenoxymethyl] propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Cyano [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 [(2-pyridinylsulfanyl) methyl] propanoic acid;~~

~~3- [(4' Chloro [1, 1' biphenyl] 4 yl) sulfonyl] 2 [(2-pyridinylmethyl) sulfanyl] methyl] propanoic acid;~~

3-[(4'-Cyano [1, 1'-biphenyl]-4-yl) sulfonyl]-2-[(3-butyl-2, 5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(3-butyl-2,5-dioxo-imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanamide;

3-[(4'-Chloro[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[(5-hydroxymethyl-2,4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl) methyl] propanoic acid;

~~3- [(4 (Benzoylamino) phenyl) sulfonyl] 2 [(phenylsulfanyl) methyl] propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[4-(Benzoylamino)phenyl]sulfonyl-N-hydroxy-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]-propanamide;~~

~~3-[4-(Benzoylamino)phenyl]sulfonyl-2-[(2-pyridinylmethyl)sulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[4-(Benzoylamino)phenyl]sulfonyl-2-[(2-thienylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[4-(Benzoylamino)phenyl]sulfonyl-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Methylbenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Methylbenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanamide;~~

~~3-[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanamide;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-(3-fluorophenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(2-pyridinylmethyl)sulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(1-methyl-1H-tetrazol-5-yl)sulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Chlorobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(5-hydroxymethyl-2,4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-[(phenylsulfanyl)methyl]propanamide;~~

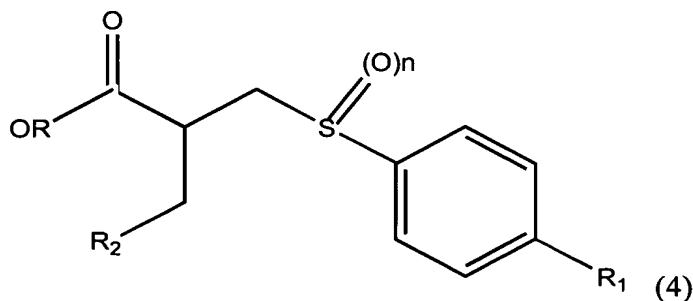
~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(1-methyl-1H-tetrazol-5-yl)sulfanyl)methyl]propanoic acid;~~

~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~  
~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanamide;~~  
~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-(3-fluorophenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~  
~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-N-hydroxy-2-(3-fluorophenoxymethyl)propanamide;~~  
~~3-[[4-[(4-Cyanobenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[(2-acetylamino)phenoxymethyl]propanoic acid;~~  
~~3-[[4-(4-Propylbenzoylamino)phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-[[1-methyl-1H-tetrazol-5-yl]sulfonyl]methyl]propanoic acid; and~~  
~~3-[[4-[(4-Methoxybenzoyl)amino]phenyl]sulfonyl]-2-(phenoxymethyl)propanoic acid;~~  
~~3-[(4'-Chloro-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)sulfonyl]-2-[[2-(hydroxymethyl)phenoxy]methyl]propanoic acid; and~~

the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a compound as defined in claim 1, starting from a

compound of formula 4:





wherein R is H or the residue of a carboxylic acid ester, R<sub>1</sub> is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 4-fluorophenyl, 4-cyanophenyl, benzamido and benzamido substituted on the terminal phenyl ring by C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, fluoro, chloro, cyano or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkoxy;

R<sub>2</sub> is selected from:

~~(a) S Ar or S CH<sub>2</sub> Ar, wherein Ar is a monocarbocyclic or bicarbocyclic aromatic moiety which may be either unsubstituted or substituted with one or two substituents selected from the group consisting of C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, phenyl, benzyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkoxy, fluoro, chloro, bromo, nitro, cyano, hydroxy, amino, dimethylamino, acetamido, methylthio and acetyl;~~

~~(b) O Ar, wherein Ar is as defined above;~~

~~(c) S Het or S CH<sub>2</sub> Het, wherein Het is a heterocyclic ring selected from the group consisting of pyridine, pyrimidine, pyridazine, pyrazine, 1,2,5 triazine, imidazole, thiophene, furan, pyrrole, pyrazole, 1,3 thiazole, 1,3 oxazole, 1,2,3 triazole, 1,2,4 triazole, 1,3,4 thiadiazole, 1,3,4 oxadiazole, 1,2,3,4 tetrazole, quinoline, isoquinoline, indole, 1,3-benzoxazole, 1,3 benzothiazole, benzimidazole, [1,3] oxazolo [4,5 b] pyridine, [1,3] thiazolo [4,5 b] pyridine, [1,2,3,4]tetrazolo [1,5 b] pyridazine and purine, and wherein said Het group can be substituted with one to three substituents selected from the group consisting of C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, phenyl, pyridyl, benzyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkoxy, methylthio, fluoro, chloro, nitro, cyano, hydroxy, oxo, amino, methylamino, dimethylamino, 2 dimethylaminoethyl, acetamido and acetyl; or~~

(d) 2,5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl or 2,4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl, which may be optionally substituted at the carbon atom by one or two methyl, linear or branched C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, phenyl, benzyl or hydroxymethyl groups, and at the nitrogen atom with C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> linear or branched alkyl; and

n is 0 or 2,

said process comprising:

(A) hydrolysing a said compound of formula 4 in which R is the residue of a carboxylic acid and ester to give a compound of formula (I) in which X is HO- ; or

(B) hydrolysing and oxidising, in either order, a said compound of formula 4 in which n is 0 and R is the residue of a carboxylic acid ester, to give a compound of formula (I) in which X is HO- ; or

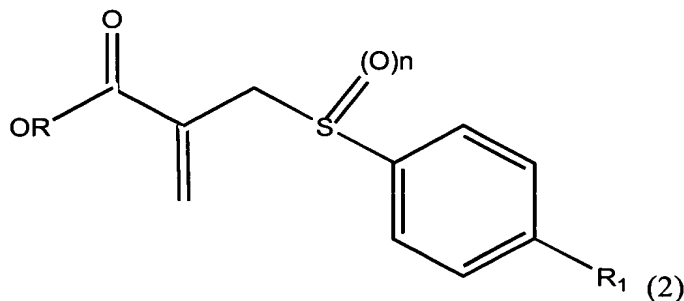
(C) activating a said compound of formula 4 wherein R is H and n is 2 to form an activated carboxy group, coupling the activated carboxy group with hydroxylamine or an O-protected derivative thereof and, if necessary, deprotecting the hydroxamic group to give a compound of formula (I) wherein X is-NHOH; or

(D) submitting a said compound of formula 4 wherein R is H and n is zero to a sequence of reactions comprising oxidation at the sulphur atom, activation of the carboxy group, condensation of the activated carboxy group with hydroxylamine or an O-protected derivative thereof and, if necessary, deprotection of the hydroxamic group to form a compound of formula (I) wherein X is-NHOH, the oxidation step being conducted either before the activation step or after the condensation step; and/or

(E) if desired, converting a resulting compound of formula (I) into another compound of formula (I); and/or converting a free compound into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and/or converting a salt into a free compound.

5. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 4 wherein the compound of formula 4 is obtained by

(a) subjecting a compound of formula 2:



wherein R is H or the residue of a carboxylic acid ester,  $R_1$  is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 4-fluorophenyl, 4-cyanophenyl, benzamido and benzamido substituted on the terminal phenyl ring by  $C_1$ - $C_4$  alkyl, fluoro, chloro, cyano or  $C_1$ - $C_4$  alkoxy; and

n is 0 or 2

to conjugate addition by treatment with a compound of formula  $R_2H$  wherein  $R_2$  is selected from:

~~(a) S Ar or S  $CH_2$  Ar, wherein Ar is a monocarboicyclic or bicarboicyclic aromatic moiety which may be either unsubstituted or substituted with one or two substituents selected from the group consisting of  $C_1$ - $C_4$  alkyl, phenyl, benzyl,  $C_1$ - $C_4$  alkoxy, fluoro, chloro, bromo, nitro, cyano, hydroxy, amino, dimethylamino, acetamido, methylthio and acetyl;~~

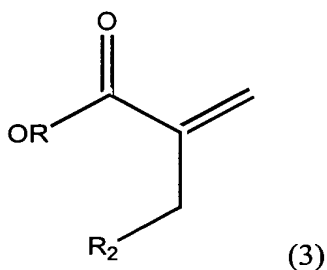
~~(b) O Ar, wherein Ar is as defined above;~~

~~(c) S Het or S  $CH_2$  Het, wherein Het is a heterocyclic ring selected from the group consisting of pyridine, pyrimidine, pyridazine, pyrazine, 1,2,5 triazine, imidazole, thiophene, furan, pyrrole, pyrazole, 1,3 thiazole, 1,3 oxazole, 1,2,3 triazole, 1,2,4 triazole, 1,3,4 thiadiazole, 1,3,4 oxadiazole, 1,2,3,4 tetrazole, quinoline, isoquinoline, indole, 1,3-benzoxazole, 1,3-benzothiazole, benzimidazole, [1,3] oxazole [4,5 b] pyridine, [1,3] thiazole [4,5 b] pyridine, [1,2,3,4] tetrazole [1,5 b] pyridazine and purine, and wherein said Het group can be substituted with one to three substituents selected from the group consisting of  $C_1$ - $C_4$  alkyl, phenyl, pyridyl, benzyl,  $C_1$ - $C_4$  alkoxy, methylthio, fluoro, chloro, nitro, cyano, hydroxy, oxo, amino, methylamino, dimethylamino, 2 dimethylaminoethyl, acetamido and~~

~~acetyl; or~~

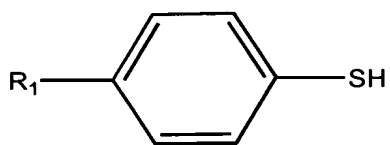
(d) 2,5-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl or 2,4-dioxo-1-imidazolidinyl, which may be optionally substituted at the carbon atom by one or two methyl, linear or branched C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl, phenyl, benzyl or hydroxymethyl groups, and at the nitrogen atom with C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> linear or branched alkyl;

(b) treating a compound of formula 3:



wherein R and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined as above,

with a thiol of formula:



to obtain a compound of formula 4 in which n is zero.

6. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition which comprises a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent and, as an active principle, the compound as defined in claim 1.

7-10 (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) A method of treating a mammal, including a human, comprising administering the compound claimed in claim 1, to said mammal, including a human, in need thereof.

12. (Previously Presented) A method for treating a disease in a mammal, including a human, comprising administering an effective amount of the compound as claimed in claim 1, to said mammal, including a human, in need thereof, wherein said disease is a disease mediated by a matrix metalloproteinase.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the matrix metalloproteinase is selected from the group consisting of gelatinase (MMP-2), a membrane MMP involved in gelatinase activation (MMP-14), a stromelysin (MMP-3 or MMP-10), collagenase (MMP-13) and neutrophyl collagenase (MMP-8).

14. (Previously Presented) A method for the prevention of a disease in a mammal, including a human, comprising administering the compound claimed in claim 1, to said mammal, including a human, in need thereof, wherein said disease is a disease mediated by a matrix metalloproteinase.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the matrix metalloproteinase is selected from the group consisting of gelatinase (MMP-2), a membrane

MMP involved in gelatinase activation (MMP-14), a stromelysin (MMP-3 or MMP-10), collagenase (MMP-13) and neutrophyl collagenase (MMP-8).

16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of tumor growth, tumor metastasis, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, ophthalmic disease, cardiovascular disease, periodontal disease, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of tumor growth, tumor metastasis, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, ophthalmic disease, cardiovascular disease, periodontal disease, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease.